

T H R E E
D I S C O U R S E S

DELIVERED

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A R G Y L E C H A P E L,

B A T H,

JANUARY XXX, MDCCXCI.

I.

By REV. WILLIAM JAY.

II.

By REV. CORNELIUS WINTER.

III.

By REV. JOHN ADAMS.

B A T H:

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TO
THE CONGREGATION
MEETING IN
ARGYLE CHAPEL,
THESE DISCOURSES,
PUBLISHED BY THEIR DESIRE,
ARE
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY
THEIR VERY AFFECTIONATE
FRIENDS AND SERVANTS
IN CHRIST,
THE AUTHORS.

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A N
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T O T H E

C O N G R E G A T I O N .

Dear and Honoured Friends,

THOUGH I was as forward as yourselves for the publication of the other parts of the service, I was averse to the publication of the several thoughts I delivered on the same occasion; nor should I have sent them abroad, had it not been for repeated solicitation, and for the sake of those important instructions which were not to make their appearance without them. My reluctance did not arise from an over nice delicacy, or from a fear of the discovery of my creed, but from a persuasion of its inutility; my sentiments having

been all along fully known, and the design of the work of the day equally answered without it. The intention of it was not to bring to light our proceedings—it was not to make a pastor or declare a person to be one—it was not to unite us, or to ratify such a union, much less was it to invest with any new power, or authorise an administration of the ordinances. The simple design of it was to receive instruction, in order to impress us with a sense of our mutual duties, and to implore the “God of all Grace” to bless “us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.”

As I had taken no minutes of what I delivered, I feared I should be unable to recollect it so far as to give satisfaction; however I may venture to say from several testimonies, that the address which you now see, is the same which you lately heard. I did not absolutely determine to say any thing on the occasion. I left it to the freedom of my mind, and finding inclination, and liberty, I spake freely, regardless of the studied plan of confessional system.

“The

“ The glorious gospel of the blessed God our Saviour, is the great object of our attention as minister and people; this only am I allowed to preach, this only are you allowed to hear. If I mistake not the substance of it it is to be found in the following pages. Some probably will deem my creed deficient; such should remember that I have not here delivered all my sentiments, or every thing relative to one of them. It is enough if I believe in my heart, and confess with my mouth Jesus Christ and him crucified. The Apostle determined to know nothing in comparison with it. He begun his ministry by delivering “ first of all, that which he also received, “ how that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and “ was buried, and rose again according to “ the scriptures.” And it is more than probable he ended it in a similar manner, saying, “ God forbid that I should glory save in the “ cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “ He is the “ author and finisher of our faith;” his obedience and sacrifice the alpha and omega of the gospel. “ No other foundation can any “ man lay than that which is laid. Now if

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“ any man build upon this foundation gold,
“ silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble :
“ every man’s work shall be made manifest,
“ for the day shall declare it, because it
“ shall be revealed by fire.” Blessed be God,
many of you know, and are assured, that the
fall of man, the redemption of Christ, the
work of the Spirit, and many other things
inseparable from them ; far from being opini-
ons, are facts ; facts, which may be opposed ;
facts which can never be overturned. Per-
haps some of you who are poor and illiterate,
are not able to dispute their truth, or solve
the objections with which they have been
loaded ; but you are as satisfied of their re-
ality, as those who may possess a capacity
competent to both. While others are con-
troverting as a *notion* whether you are dis-
ordered, and whether you are incapable of
action, you do not hesitate for a moment ; it
is a fact, you see, you feel, you groan be-
neath the sad effects of your deep rooted
malady. While others are controverting as
a *notion*, whether there is such a thing as the
sun in the firmament, and whether he be-
nefits

benefits the earth; you entertain no doubt it is a fact, you see its light, you feel its heat, you rejoice in its pleasant influence. To drop metaphor. You are not captives to a blind belief, nor is your faith the child of folly. You do not receive your religion without proof; for while others who are able may judge from outward, you judge from internal evidence; while others who are able may determine from the conviction of the mind, you judge from the conviction of the heart.

“ If you hold the head,” you will not be “ carried about by strange doctrines.” “ While others are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of “ the truth,” “ as you have received Christ “ Jesus the Lord, so you will continue to “ walk in him, rooted and built up in him, “ and established in the faith as ye have been “ taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” A disposition for novelty in religious truth is the spring of error running through the flowery field of speculation into the

the gulph of apostacy. It is the mark of a bad palate when a man is for ever seeking fresh food, and it is an indication of a corrupt mind to despise and neglect common truth. Happy in the possession of what others seek for in vain, you will be satisfied with "the word of life, which you have known, handled, and tasted;" content with this provision you will feed and "grow thereby," and "be nourished up in the words of faith and sound doctrine." While others are strangers to a peace of understanding, their understanding being perpetually on the search, not knowing where to settle, you will come to a point, and be able to make an absolute unhesitating conclusion. And while their mind, "like a wave of the sea, be driven to and fro and tossed" on the ocean of uncertainty till dashed on the rocks of scepticism or infidelity; you will "continue in the things which you have heard knowing of whom ye have learned them," "and your hearts will be comforted, being knit together in love, unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment

“ ledgment of the mystery of God, of the
 “ Father, and of Christ.”

You will remember that by the things which you have heard you are saved “ if ye
 “ keep in memory what has been preached
 “ unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.” They are the chief sources of comfort, and the principal motives to duty. “ Ye shall
 “ know the truth and the truth shall make
 “ you free.” It unbinds the captive soul from the chains of sin, and releases him from the bondage of misery. Other doctrines may bring a few persons on the cold legs of custom to a place of worship, and keep them from some enormous crimes, but they are not effectual “ to turn a sinner from
 “ darkness to light or the power of Satan
 “ to God ;” nor can one instance be produced of any nation, society, or individual, experiencing a moral change of nature where these truths have been renounced. Therefore we do not plead for them as mere notions, but truths, we do not plead for them as mere truths, but as truths essential to
 our

our holiness and happiness. If people will shew us other doctrines which will better answer the purpose of reforming the wicked, of purifying the heart, of supporting the mind under the sorrows of life, and of enabling the soul to rejoice in “the dark valley of the shadow of death” “with joy unspeakable and full of glory” “we will believe.”

But you will observe that no system of doctrine will serve in the stead of that grace by which the heart is to be renewed, and the life sanctified. Purity of sentiment, followed with wicked practice, is only “holding the truth in unrighteousness.” “Faith without works,” is as the body without the spirit, “dead being alone.” He that cherishes it is a “vain man.”—Would God we knew not where to find such a character!—But alas! how numerous are the instances of professors discovering immoderate attachment to “the present evil world,” and instead of confessing themselves to be “strangers and pilgrims upon earth” seeking
a na-

a naturalization into its prohibited customs and delusive honors ! Hence so little favor of grace in their conversation, so little spirituality in their devotions, so little holiness in their lives ! Be not ye conformed to them. “ Adorn the doctrine of God “ your Saviour in all things.” Let your practice praise your creed, and your lives do honor to your heads. “ Walk worthy of “ the vocation wherewith you are called,” “ as heirs of the grace of eternal life,” “ joined “ together in the same mind and in the same “ judgment, striving together for the faith of “ the gospel.” In our present connection let us never forget our duty and privilege. “ O “ house of Israel, trust thou in the Lord ; “ he is their help and their shield. O house “ of Aaron, trust thou in the Lord ; he is “ their help and their shield. The Lord “ hath been mindful of us, he will bless us, “ he will bless the house of Israel, he will “ bless the house of Aaron.” “ Except “ the Lord build the house, they labor “ in vain that build it. Except the Lord “ keep the city the watchman waketh but “ in

"in vain." "Commit thy way unto the
 "Lord, trust also in him and he will bring
 "it to pass." "O satisfy us early with
 "thy mercy; that we may rejoice and
 "be glad all our days. Let thy work ap-
 "pear unto thy servants, and thy glory un-
 "to their children. And let the beauty of
 "the Lord our God be upon us: and es-
 "tablish thou the work of our hands upon
 "us, yea the work of our hands establish
 "thou it."

WILLIAM JAY.

A VIEW OF THE GOSPEL;

OR, THE

PRINCIPAL MATTER

OF AN

EVANGELICAL MINISTRY;

DELIVERED IN

A N A D D R E S S

TO THE

C O N G R E G A T I O N

M E E T I N G I N

A R G Y L E C H A P E L.

By REV. WILLIAM JAY.

I TIM. I. XV.

THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTA-
TION, THAT
JESUS CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD
TO SAVE SINNERS.

A VIEW OF THE GOSPEL;

OR THE

PRINCIPAL MATTER

OF AN

EVANGELICAL MINISTRY;

DELIVERED IN

AN ADDRESS

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MEETING IN

ARGYLE CHAPEL.

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I TIM. I. XV.

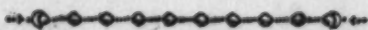
THAT IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTANCE

FROM THEM

WHICH CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD

TO SAVE SINNERS.

A VIEW OF THE GOSPEL.



MOREOVER BRETHREN, I DECLARE UNTO YOU THE GOSPEL WHICH I PREACHED UNTO YOU, WHICH ALSO YOU HAVE RECEIVED AND WHEREIN YE STAND; BY WHICH ALSO YE ARE SAVED, IF YE KEEP IN MEMORY WHAT I HAVE PREACHED UNTO YOU, UNLESS YE HAVE BELIEVED IN VAIN.

THE sacred business in which we are engaged is to commemorate, solemnize, and sanctify by prayer, and instruction, the union which the minister and people of this church for a considerable time, have formed.

Such an union should always be formed with a cautious regard to the divine will, an affectionate concern for immortal souls,

C

and

and a pleasing hope of being helpers of each others joy.

It is a work of the greatest importance because of its consequences, for it is not so much a natural as a spiritual connection ; not so much designed for time as eternity ; not so much to be judged, approved, or censured in the present state, as in the future day, when we must all in our individual, relative, and public capacity “ give an account of ourselves unto God.”

“ To save us with a holy calling not according to our works but according to his purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” has been the one grand aim of Jehovah adhered to in every age, in every state of the present system, and universally pursued through all the course of nature and order of Providence.

“ Salvation belongeth unto the Lord.” It is his own work ; nor does he detract from his glory as the author by using instruments
to

to accomplish it. He could have easily done without men, but he is pleased to act with them, and hence some of them are called saviors, the salt of the earth, and the light of the world, because under his divine influence they communicate spiritual advantage. To make us love one another, which is a great design of religion, God has appointed us to be the means of communicating his blessings and under the law made men priests, and under the gospel made men ministers "having infirmity."

He has not commissioned any of the higher orders of intelligences, "thrones or dominions, principalities or powers," "the angels that excel in strength and do his commandments hearkening unto the voice of his word," but descending to earth he has sent forth the sons of men; "go ye in to all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some

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"pastors

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C 2

"pastors

“pastors and teachers; for the work of the
 “ministry, for the perfecting of the saints,
 “for the edifying of his body the church.”

He will never fail in his instruments while he has any purpose to bring to pass. He may, and he does produce changes in his church, removing one and another; yet he has always a reserve of instruments in his secret intention, and in the due time they are made manifest. He will never leave his work without witnesses, or suffer those to perish for want of provision who “commit the keeping of their souls to him,” “in well doing.”

I hope my beloved, that you have seen the truth of this remark in the several steps you have taken since your social connection, and that on the present occasion you are ready to utter the memory of his goodness, in the words of the restored Jews, “He hath done great things for us whereof
 “we are glad.”

Indeed

Indeed it becomes me to speak with proper modesty on this subject. I am not going to intimate that the Lord has fully repaired your late and deplorable loss. I am not about to flatter him who now addresses you by placing him on an equality with your dear departed Pastor. No. As I am inferior to him in years, so I am inferior to him in grace. As I come behind him in succession of labor, so I come behind him in every natural endowment, in every acquired help, in every spiritual qualification, that can make the shining man, or adorn the illustrious minister.

I hope therefore none will consider the hint which I am going to drop as in the least tending to make you insensible of your affliction in the death of the great man who has fallen in this Israel.—While creatures decay and die “the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not neither is weary, there is no searching of his understanding.” Immutable in his nature, unfrustrable in his designs, “his council shall stand, and he will

“do all his pleasure.” The loss of no instrument, the loss of no set of instruments shall render his purpose of none effect, “the thoughts of his heart endure to all generations,” Separate from his blessing no good can be done, and as all success depends on him he can work with one as well as another; “who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.”

On this occasion I suppose it is expected that several things will be delivered relative to myself; and believing that it is not only looked for but desired, I have no objection to it.

Fully satisfied that personal religion is necessary to perform every office in the church
with

with propriety, I should not have entered on the ministerial work in general, or the pastoral charge in particular, without some satisfactory hope that God had "called me by his grace, and revealed his Son in me."

An early dedication to God made way for an early dedication to the work of the ministry. I cannot help tracing the hand of God in the whole of this affair. Born to no secular honor, possessed of no fortune, bred up in the shades of obscurity, I had not the least qualification for the work, or the least probability of being brought into it. But the Lord by providential circumstances opened the door, and I was placed under the care of my dear and honored tutor Mr. Winter, the best friend I ever had; to whose character I would bear my publick testimony, whose amiable temper, generous disposition, condescending carriage, unceasing friendship, I could enlarge upon with pleasure were I not forbid by his presence; properties which having been displayed in general, and in particular towards me, will ever render his

memory dear and apologize for my feelings on the present occasion.—

By him I was gradually introduced to the ministry, and went out preaching from place to place as opportunity offered, refusing offers of settlement on account of my age, and satisfied that in due time the Lord would make plain the way, and open a door for stated labor. And I cannot help concluding that, he has made the way plain to, and opened a door in this place; our attachment has been mutual from the beginning, our affection has increased upon acquaintance, and I hope our love will flourish through time, and shine bright to all eternity.

As I have believed so have I spoken. I have advanced no doctrine from the pulpit which I was not satisfied of in my mind, nor have I kept back from you any thing that I conceived profitable for you to know. I never aimed to deliver my ideas in ambiguous terms. I never thought I had a
tongue

tongue given me to cloak my creed, and puzzle people. What I have embraced as true I have without fear or shame openly avowed. Therefore you must "fully know" my doctrine already; however, "ready" always to give an answer to every man "that asketh a reason of the hope that is in me with meekness and fear;" "moreover" brethren, I declare unto you the gospel "which I preached unto you, which also" you have received, and wherein ye stand, "by which also ye are saved if ye keep in" memory what I preached unto you, unless "ye have believed in vain."

"He that cometh unto God must believe" that he is." This is the foundation of all religion. If there be no God, there is no divine law; if there be no divine law, there is no difference between virtue and vice; and if there be no difference between virtue and vice, morality can only be, considered in the highest light, a civil thing established by human authority.

Without

Without an overruling Providence we can have no confidence in the Supreme Being; if saints we shall want the principal solace in adversity, if sinners we shall want the principal restraint in prosperity.

If we pervert this necessary doctrine by denying a particular providence, we destroy a particular confidence, a particular source of comfort, a particular motive to duty, and give our actions only a general rule of reference.

As we "believe in God," we must "believe also in Jesus Christ." Man stands related to God and his neighbour. The divine law considers him in this light, and requires him to love the one with all his heart, and the other as himself. By considering his relation to God as his creator and preserver, he may discover how destitute he is of that love, reverence, gratitude, and obedience he owes to him as his benefactor. By considering his relation to his neighbour, he may discover how destitute he is of that
charity

charity and justice which he owes to him as a brother. Thus he finds himself a transgressor, is led to acknowledge his desert, and is brought to perceive those doctrines by which the religion of Christianity is distinct from, and superior to, the religion of nature.

The religion of Christianity, in whole and in part, respects man as fallen; by which I mean a *blind, weak, guilty, miserable* creature.

Therefore the depravity of man is a very material article in an evangelical creed. And it is an article no less necessary to be believed, than easy to be proved, demonstrated through every age, in every country, by every person.

The corruption is universal, no part remains uninjured. It is the cause of all actual transgression. The evil practice of the life proceeds from the "desperately wicked and deceitful heart;" the tree being bad the fruit is bad, the spring being corrupt the

the streams are corrupt also. Our pride is the cause of all "the filthiness of the spirit," and the dominion of sense of all the "filthiness of the flesh;" by the one we are alienated from God, by the other attached to the earth. From hence arises that impotency which the scripture attributes to us, by which we are incapable of faith, repentance, and holiness. If we give up the doctrine of the fall, we preclude all possibility of recovery; like a disordered man, who imagines he is well, and therefore refuses the medicine which would recover him from the sad effects of his malady. But if we are truly convinced that we are sinners, and are unable to deliver ourselves, we shall be suitably disposed for "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord."

This knowledge relates to what he is and represents him to us as "the true God and eternal life," as "made in the form of a servant" and "manifested in the flesh." Hence his name is "wonderful," because while he is the "Child born" and the "Son given" he is also "the everlasting Father,"
 "the

“the Prince of Peace.” He is divine as well as human; and the same thing which proves him to be the one proves him to be the other; allowing the word of truth to be judge, I could as well deny that he was man, as that he was God. To deny the deity of Christ is the same in revealed religion, as to deny the being of a God in natural religion. It is the foundation, remove it and the superstructure falls; the doctrines are unintelligible, the promises vain, the precepts weak in their motive, impertinent in their application, and unoperative in their influence.—But that he is the “Lord God Almighty” is the belief of my mind, and the rejoicing of my heart. There is no name by which “the living and true God” differs from “false and dumb idols;”—there is no perfection by which the “God over all,” is known from “the lords many and gods many;”—there is no act of worship by which the “Most High” is distinguished from “the powers which are” receiving ceremonious respect and civil adoration;—there is no work by which

“the

“the Creator” can be discriminated from “the creature” as to nature, providence, grace, or glory, that is not ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The gospel relates to what he *did*. It contains his history from the throne to the cross, and from the cross back to the throne. It represents him as undertaking to remove our sins according to his address to his Father as he comes into the world, “Sacrifice” and offerings thou hast not required, then “said I, lo I come to do thy will, O God,” “by the which will we are sanctified through” “the offering up of the body of Jesus Christ.” It discovers him to us as “wounded for our” “transgressions, bruised for our iniquities,” “delivered for our offences, and rising” “again for our justification.

He has realized what the various victims under the law only typified. They made their appearance to shew their inefficacy, and to convince “the comers thereunto” that they stood in need of a “better sacrifice, be-
“cause

“cause they could not take away sin.” “But
 “he by the once offering up of himself has
 “for ever perfected them that are sancti-
 “fied,” so that “there remains no other,”
 and there needs no other “sacrifice;” “by
 “him all that believe are justified freely
 “from *all things*.

The doctrine of the atonement, not in
 the reserved ambiguous way in which many
 use the term, who deny the thing, but
 “Christ dying for our sins” in the pro-
 per sense of the expression; I consider as
 that which constitutes the good news, or
 glad tidings, which the word gospel signi-
 fies. It is a great advantage that by the gos-
 pel we have so plain and perfect a system of
 duty, but it is a degradation of it to sup-
 pose it was only designed to republish the
 law of nature. The intent of the gospel is
 indeed to recover us to true holiness; but
 for this purpose there was need of some-
 thing more than a revelation of moral obli-
 gation which is set forth by the Apostle.

“Our

" Our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself
 " for us, that he might redeem us from all
 " iniquity, and purify unto himself a pe-
 " culiar people zealous of good works."
 Restoration to the divine favor was the first
 thing to be provided for, and would of
 course be the first concern of every man as
 soon as he found he was " guilty before
 " God." To what purpose to lay before
 the convinced sinner a rule of duty without
 giving him a ground of hope. Discover to
 him pardon for past sins, and assistance for
 future obedience, and then such a rule
 would be seasonable, and this is the order
 in which the gospel proceeds as preached by
 the Apostle. " And all things are of God,
 " who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus
 " Christ, and hath given to us the ministry
 " of reconciliation; to wit, that God was
 " in Christ reconciling the world unto him-
 " self, not imputing their trespasses unto
 " them, Now then we are embassadors for
 " Christ, as though God did beseech you by
 " us: we pray you in Christ's stead to be
 " reconciled unto God. For he hath made
 " him

"him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that
 "we might be made the righteousness of
 "God in him."

There is no other scheme of doctrine which
 deserves even the name of the *gospel*.—Sup-
 pose the gospel to be only a system of mora-
 lity, requiring that we should "be holy
 "and without blame before him in love."
 —Here is no good news for the sinner.
 He has no inclination or ability to "be
 "sanctified throughout body, soul, and spi-
 "rit."—Suppose the gospel treats princi-
 pally of the resurrection. Here is no good
 news for the sinner.—He is not delighted
 with the idea of rising again, he would ra-
 ther remain in the grave forever.—Suppose
 the gospel only brings "immortality to
 "light." Here is no good news for the sin-
 ner.—He is not pleased with the thoughts of
 eternal duration, he would rather cease his
 continuance.—Suppose the gospel only a pro-
 mise of pardon and life, on condition of faith
 and repentance. Here is no good news for the
 D finner.

sinner. It is bad news, his desire is only
 irritated to be disappointed; like a person
 engaging to give me an estate if I will fly to
 the moon.—Or suppose the gospel to be a
 revelation of absolute mercy as ready to par-
 don iniquity. Even here is no good news
 for the sinner, unless he can see a way in
 which it can come to him agreeable to the
 character which the scripture has led him to
 entertain of God. “God is holy in all his
 “ways, and righteous in all his works.”—
 Whatever favors he confers as a bene-
 factor, he must preserve his claims as a le-
 gislator. Therefore when I begin to be de-
 lighted with the glad tidings of Mercy, say-
 ing, Spare him, bless him; I am terrified
 again by the language of Justice, Cut him
 off, destroy him. It is evident the one, as
 well as the other, exists; the one, as well as
 the other has its claim. In this case Mercy
 shews me the tree of life; Justice stands with
 the flaming sword to guard it from approach.
 If we say that we should take the declaration
 of God that he will *pardon* iniquity without
 any

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any other consideration, and be satisfied of his doing it; why may we not say that we should take the declaration of God that he will *punish* iniquity without any other consideration, and be satisfied of his doing it? Shall we make the divine perfections any thing or nothing, magnifying one and depreciating another? Is the divine law to vary in its demand, and fail in its execution? Shall we weaken its authority by dispensing with its penalty?—We cannot do this, for if the penalty be founded in the fitness of things, and agreeable to the divine perfections; and unless it was so, God would never have appointed it, it follows, that not only we, but God himself cannot dispense with it any more than with the whole law.

I think no man can rationally hope for pardon unless he can see a way in which God can do it *as God*, “and be *faithful* and “*just* to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us “from all iniquity.”

Such a scheme is the gospel; it reveals a free, rich, righteous salvation through Jesus Christ, "set forth as the propitiation for "sin through faith in his blood." Hence it answers its name; it is good news, glad tidings. It would be easy to illustrate this view of the gospel. If there was a man in debt and I told him a Surety had discharged him—If there was a man perishing for want, and I told him of provision—If there was a man destitute of cloathing, and I told him of raiment—Or if there was a condemned man and I told him of liberty and life; who does not see in each case that here would be good news.—Sinner, "behold I bring thee glad "tidings of great joy"—Sinner, indebted to divine justice, having nothing to pay, behold "the surety of a better covenant," "the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"—Sinner, perishing with hunger, behold "the bread of life whereof if a man "eats he shall never die." Naked soul here "is fine raiment that thou mayest be "cloathed, that the shame of thy nakedness "may not appear." And thou poor wretch,

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writing bitter things against thyself, condemned by the holy law, crying where shall I fly for refuge ; “ believe on the Lord “ Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

In order that the gospel might be of advantage to us, faith is necessary. In whatever way the blessings of salvation are represented, faith is requisite to a proper enjoyment of them. One should imagine that benefits calculated to relieve our wants, and make us eternally happy, presented to us in the gospel, would be eagerly embraced. But this is far from being the case. The pride of the human heart scorns to stoop, it hates obligation, it affects an independence. It will not submit to the righteousness which is of God ; it would rather patch up a shelter than “ fly for refuge to lay hold of the hope “ set before it in the gospel.”

Therefore the operation of the Spirit is necessary. This is one of the principal glories of the evangelical dispensation, and it

shall be my endeavour to shew my hearers that their regeneration, advance in holiness, support under trouble, final perseverance, everlasting triumph over all the cursed effects of sin, depends on the agency of the Holy Spirit. Revelation is no sooner admitted than reason confirms this truth. We allow that the miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit have ceased because their necessity has ceased—but we affirm that his ordinary operations continue, because the necessity of them continues. Why was the Spirit given forth upon the followers of the Apostles? To sanctify them. Have we less need or more ability for sanctification than they had? It was given to “shed abroad the love of God in their hearts.” Have we more spiritual, more fervent affections? It was given “to help their infirmities.” Have we less weakness? It was given “to bear witness with their spirits that they were the children of God.” Have we no need of this testimony to assure our hearts before him? To deny the influences of the Spirit, is to relax the energy of the gospel, and turn the

the church into a valley of dry bones. To suppose an innate efficacy in the word to produce faith, is to suppose an innate virtue in the sun to produce a plant. The seed must be there previously before the one or the other can bring forth fruit. To talk of the fitness of things, the beauty of virtue, the union of moral and natural good and evil, is good in its nature, and true in its fact; and upon men who are truly wise and well-disposed, may have influence, but this is not forceable enough to disentangle the heart which is already an enemy to reason, allied to vice, sunk in sensuality, enslaved by appetite and passion. To produce faith is solely the prerogative of God; we own indeed that the word is a mean in his hand, but deny that it possesses any power to do it independent of the Holy Ghost; the gospel therefore is called "the ministration of the Spirit," because his influence renders it efficacious, and continues to make it an instrument of operation to the end of the world.

Holiness is necessary to present peace and future glory. Without it no man shall see the Lord; and so far is the doctrine of the cross from opposing this truth, that Jesus Christ crucified is the principle and end of it. The man who believes in him, believes in him for righteousness. While he disclaims merit he delights in gratitude, and it is his desire and endeavour to "walk before God" in holiness and righteousness all the days of "his life." He is as much distinguished by his practice as by his creed; his works are evidential of his faith, and his faith is the spring of his works; for in order to all true holiness, pride, and the dominion of sense must be destroyed. And what can destroy the one or the other? Nothing ever has, nothing ever will, nothing ever can, but faith in Christ crucified. Every other scheme of doctrine which has spread in the world has tended to promote one or the other. But the believer, from his union with the Saviour, experiences the gradual destruction of both according to the words of the Apostle: "I
"am

" am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I
 " live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me :
 " and the life which I now live in the flesh
 " I live by the faith of the Son of God, who
 " loved me and gave himself for me."

As it is the work of God, and he does no-
 thing in time which he did not design to do
 from eternity, salvation is his own eternal
 purpose, and the effect of his gracious sove-
 reignty ; " according as he has chosen us in
 " him, that we should be holy and without
 " blame before him in love, having predef-
 " tinated us unto the adoption of children
 " by Jesus Christ to himself, according to
 " the good pleasure of his will, to the praise
 " of the glory of his grace." And as his pur-
 pose and the promises which are the disco-
 very of it cannot be broken, the " righteous
 " shall hold on his way, and he that hath
 " clean hands shall wax stronger and
 " stronger."

"and separated with Christ, and yet not
"lost the life which I now live in the flesh
"I live by the flesh of the Son of God, who
"loved me and gave himself for me."
"It is the word of God, and he does no
"thing in vain, which he did not desire to do
"from eternity, but he did it in the flesh
"because he loved me, and he did it for me
"and for all who believe in him, and he did it
"that I should be holy, and I without
"blemish before him, a very holy people
"whom he has chosen, and he has chosen us
"by Jesus Christ, so that we should be
"the good pleasure of his will, and we are
"at the glory of his grace, and we are pur-
"pursuing the good pleasure of his will, and we are
"very obedient to his will, and we are
"that he should hold on his way, and he has
"clean hands, and he is a very holy man, and
"strong."

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THE
CHARACTER, DIFFICULTY,
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OF
J E S U S C H R I S T,
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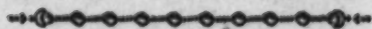
BY REV. CORNELIUS WINTER,

I TIM. I. XVIII.

THIS CHARGE I COMMIT UNTO THEE THAT THOU MIGHTEST
WAR A GOOD WARFARE.



THE CHARACTER, DIFFICULTY, AND HONOR, OF A MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST.



A twig properly conducted and well supported may save a man from being drowned. A king may commission his servant to go to a poor cottage in some obscure part of his dominions to bring into his presence one on whom to confer his royal favor. In the one case there is no merit due to the twig; nor in the other, glory to be given to the servant.—Mr. Jay, in the course of his address, has involuntarily ascribed too much to me; while I esteem it an honor to have been the instrument of introducing him into the work of the ministry, I have no claim to an equal measure of his endowments; hence I am under a necessity to address him from these papers, wherein I have collected a few thoughts which entirely respect *You* my dear

dear brother; therefore, let me desire you to fix your attention upon, and regulate your conduct by the advice of the Apostle to his beloved Timothy; as you will find it recorded in the

II TIM. II. 3.

THOU THEREFORE ENDURE HARDNESS AS
A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST.

IN things pertaining to God, it behoves us to think, and speak, with the greatest regard to truth. On occasions like this, wherein there is peculiar propriety in enlarging on the duty and work of a minister of the gospel, much is commonly said of the arduous nature of his office and the difficulties attending the discharge of it. Apostolick phrases are usually adopted, and applied to the subject, as though our zeal and sufferings were equal to the Apostles.

But

But on comparison the difference is very great. Therefore though there may be propriety in our using the Apostles' language, while inculcating advice relative to the station, and obligation of the christian pastor; we should be careful neither to overvalue our province in the church of Christ, nor to magnify any little inconveniencies attending it into enormous afflictions.

I think it my duty while performing the part you have assigned me in the present service, to come forward with these preliminary cautions, "least we should be found false witnesses of God."

But while I would caution against wrong ideas on these occasions, and an improper application of words, I am aware there is a parallel in common between what Timothy was, and what every good minister should be. In a sober sense therefore, the words originally addressed to him, may be used to great advantage while inculcating upon you, the instruction necessary to be observed in order
to

to the right, and faithful discharge of the duty you owe to Jesus Christ,—the different parts of the church who may share in your labors,—and to this society more immediately over which you are called to exercise the pastoral care.

A few moments recollection will lead you to observe, that the principal parts of this and the preceding epistle intirely respect the office of the evangelical ministry; to which Timothy was appointed very early in life, and in which he served with the Apostle “as a son with a father.”

The state of the times and the case of the young man who was introduced into the ministry under the Apostle, accounts for the matter, and manner of his repeated address: it was a season of the most virulent persecution from the world, degeneracy among professors, and apostacy from the faith. But whatever hitherto had turned up to make the duty of the ministry hard and difficult, the
Apostle

Apostle foresaw it was but a presage of what was to follow, and as the gathering of a cloud before a storm. Some were already "turned aside after Satan." "The time" was at hand "when sound doctrine" would not be "endured." Infirmities tending to debilitate the body, and enervate the mind, had already stolen upon the young evangelist; and the Apostle knew that all things put together, would make a combination of painful events against which he had need to be steeled and fortified; he therefore addresses him in the words I would make the foundation of my address to you upon this occasion, "thou therefore endure hardness "as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

The words lead me to—

Remind you of your relation—

What in your deportment is necessary to a proper discharge of it, and

The signal character an attention to your deportment will bring upon you.

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Your

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Your relation is that of a soldier to his sovereign, and to the state over which he is supreme. In direct terms you are related by your office to Jesus Christ, "the Prince of the kings of the earth." Though the names, and titles by which the Lord Jesus Christ is made known, do not lead immediately to the recollection of Providence, yet the movements of it are directed by him, otherwise he could not be said to "uphold all things." His church is under his providential government, nor will he ever resign the rein, to any one creature either in heaven, or in earth. The dispositions and actions of men are, and ever were overruled by him, and it is he now, as well as formerly, "who makes them able ministers of the New Testament."

As to Jesus Christ, so also are you related to the church, "whom he hath purchased with his own blood," and to whom "he is head over all things." As a Christian in your private capacity, and as a minister in your

your publick office, your relation is that of a soldier.

Hence I presume you stand prepared in your two-fold capacity, to receive such admonitions as in the sacred scriptures are to be met with relative to each.

It is essentially necessary that your religion should be well ascertained, before you can properly acquit yourself in the ministerial office. If what is essential to the being of a Christian be wanting, a proper regard to the honor and interest of Christ will not be found, and though the matter of your preaching may be "Christ Jesus the Lord," the end of your preaching will be yourself.

In this awful case it would be with you as with the member of a secular state, who would be no otherwise concerned for the event of a war threatening desolation to his country, than as it might respect his own honor and advantage.

We have no reason to think all who preach Christ are vitally made partakers of him. The great day will discover some pleading "have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out Devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works; to whom he will say, I never knew you."—In the time of our Apostle "some preached Christ" not because they were heartily concerned for his glory, "not of sincerity, but of contention, supposing to add affliction to his bonds."

A false motive may, and no doubt frequently does, by the overruling providence of God, promote a right end; but by the Christian indeed the motive will be directed to the end, because "he loves the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

My hope of you is steadfast, my dear friend, that you are made a partaker of Christ, "though I thus speak," and that if a season less favourable to the publick profession of the gospel than the present, should
ever

ever commence, that you would, without hesitation, and reserve, become "a partaker of the sufferings of Christ;" or which is the same thing, of "the afflictions of the gospel."

The peaceful state even of these times, does not wholly screen the Christian, who would be more than the Christian in name, nor will it admit of his inactivity. Many are the dangers to which the profession of the faith is exposed, not only from "the wiles of the Devil," but "by the slights of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lay in wait to deceive." Both the judgment, and the practice is exposed to the onset, and in vain is an attempt made to preserve either, by the mere dint of argument, or the force of reason, unaided by divine strength.

If then you would "please him who hath chosen you to be" a christian "soldier," you must "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," that you may "watch" to advantage, "stand fast in the faith and quit yourself like a

“man” of God.—“The armour of light” which you have taken instead of the cast off “works of darkness,” must remain upon you till you can with ease, and convenience admit of your skin being taken from your flesh. “The breastplate of faith, and love, and for “an helmet the hope of salvation,” being put on, can never with safety be put off, till you exchange your ordinary apparel for the shroud.

The contest wherein as a Christian you are engaged is good, and “the weapons” with which you carry it on must not be “carnal “but spiritual.” The faith which is the point struck at, is to be contended for earnestly, but with no degree of “wrath or malice or bitterness.” The faith you contend for is connected with eternal life, on which you are to lay hold with an eager grasp, and the full enjoyment of which you may anticipate, without being subject to that disappointment with which they are frequently mortified, “who mind earthly “things.”

As

As a Christian it is requisite that you should be "an example of believers in word, in conversation, in faith, in purity." It is expected that your doctrines should be transcribed into your life, that men beholding your works may glorify God. A becoming practice, is the best evidence we can give of the high importance in which we hold our doctrine. If in the study, and in the parlour, you can exemplify the character drawn in the pulpit, "the man and his communication" will be so well known, that his company will be courted for the sake of his communication.

"Your conversation will be without covetousness" if you are under the christian bias, "and you will be content with such things as you have." Prepared for all events you will be suitably affected by every one of them, "and glorify God in your body, and in your spirit."

While your conduct as a Christian is daily advancing towards the standard of perfection,

it will be requisite that you should study the properties, and obligations of the minister, and in the discharge of your duty, be an example to the rising generation of young men, who esteem it a privilege to be called “the servants of Jesus Christ.”

The metaphorical term by which your office is denominated, suggests—that you should be detached from every thing that would interfere with your ministry—that you are to act in concert with others under the same commission,—and that you preserve the strictest attention in your work.

To the former of these the Apostle adverts when he saith “No man that wareth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier:” if he does, the authority of his soveraign is stronger than the entanglement, and will break it without regarding the pain, and mortification attending the breach. The devotedness of the minister to his service will be in proportion to the

the zeal he has for his Master's cause, and he will therefore keep himself detached from whatever is repugnant to it.—This notion does not militate against a proper attention to the relative duties of life, the calls of friendship, or to those respective concerns the minister in common with other men is bound to attend.

In our line, the means of subsistence are sometimes so inadequate for necessary demands, that it is unavoidable but that some of us should connect the secular with the sacred employ; nor are we ashamed to own it. But as the military man though his hands are not confined from certain employments in his vacant hours, is nevertheless careful to make his personal concerns give place to the duties of his more important station, wherein the honor of his sovereign, and the welfare of the state have engaged him, so should we who are ministers “according to the dispensation of the gospel,” make every thing subservient to our great work that we may “fulfil the word of God.”

Remember,

Remember, you are not called, nor will you ever be left to serve alone. The cause of Christ, any more than the welfare of states, and nations, was never suspended upon the exertion of one man. From the beginning a large plurality of "prophets," of "apostles," of "evangelists," of "pastors," and of "teachers," have been engaged in its defence, and service. So it is at this day.

Are you one on the list with many unto whom a dispensation of the gospel is committed, and engaged in the common warfare? "Act by the same rule" common to the whole body, walk in the "same steps" with those who precede you, "mind the same thing," and "strive together" with those whose gifts and zeal perhaps are nothing inferior to your own, "for the faith of the gospel." Though in one view as a stated pastor over one people, in relation to them more particularly you are to conceive yourself detached from every body else, yet in another view you rank with all who are invested with the same office. In this view
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of the subject, ministers may be considered as so many soldiers composing the same army; and as all collected bodies admit of difference in ability, so it is in the churches; not only are there "diversities of gifts" but also different men possess the same gifts in various degrees. Though there should be some in the same rank wherein you stand on personal comparison inferior to you, despise them not, least that instance of highmindedness should be resented by your Master, and prove injurious to yourself: though with reference to a different subject the advice of our Apostle may be adopted to the point in hand, "despise them not because they are brethren, but rather do them service." There may be great zeal for the honor of God where there may be little strength, and even a little strength judiciously put forth at the divine command, in conjunction with the whole corps, may contribute to the cause of that victory, the glory of which, after all the exertions of man, must be ascribed to the Lord himself.

If

If this thought be properly digested, it will lead you to think and act diametrically opposite to some upstart characters of the present day, who without modesty conclude divine influence rests exclusively with them. No wonder therefore that with their "false tongue" they can brand with undeserved epithets, some of the most conscientious and pious ministers, for no other reason than because they have not the vivacity, and audacity with themselves, and because they cannot with their unbounded irreverence look into the grand arcana of God, and with dogmatical positiveness decide upon matters "too high" for their conscientious inquiries to reach.

Is not this a proper place for me to advise you, as you have opportunity to prove yourself a lover of good men, by cultivating society with them as occasion offers? You will often find much piety, and respectful learning unattended with your measure of popularity; I am sorry to be obliged to add, and probably
you.

you may also find some instances of prejudice against your enlarged plan of operation, and perhaps that prejudice heightened by indiscretion, hard reflection, and other things, by no means the ornaments of the Christian religion. This need not make you inattentive to your "Master who is in heaven;" love all good men, and shew becoming affection and respect to every christian minister; remove prejudices, whether justly or unjustly founded, if you can; but let no man hinder you from being as active as your strength will admit, and as extensive in your exertions as Providence affords occasion for. You have but one life to devote to God, and to spend in his service, therefore do as much in a little time as you can; and if possible, rather find time, than suffer a moment of it to be lost.

Your being one with many does not admit of carelessness. Who is that man in the heat of action, that dares to be of a dissipated mind, and amidst the importance of war can act as merely designing his amusement?—It
may

may do for the cadet, while in his military school to amuse himself with exploits, but the man in the real engagement must “fight not as one that beateth the air.” Sin is no inconsiderable enemy; attention and strength will be found necessary in order to a successful opposition, and a final conquest. Those who have been discharged with the greatest marks of the divine approbation, were the most attentive to their post; they took “heed unto their ways,” and instead of that fluctuation of conduct, common to many of our modern ministers, too expressive, alas! of a want of the due impression of the importance of their call; “humility” of mind and “many fears” accompanied their use of the sword of the spirit; let their example be imitated by you, if you would with them share the honor of conquest, and a place in the throne of God.

Your attention, and caution, is requisite to prevent the fatality of wounds, without which you cannot expect to quit the field. In the heat of conflict the fiery dart may meet

meet a tender place, and while attempting the deliverance of "the lawful captive," "the enemy may thrust sore at you that you "may fall;" but be assured if you "make "the Lord your strength" and confidence, "he will help you," and your present painful wound, shall be your future scar of honor.

As to fight, so also, to watch becomes a part of your duty. There is no watching without attention. As you discover sin attempting its inroad, you are to resume the weapon of your warfare, and oppose the enemy in his progress. Your aim must ever be against Satan, and the temptations he puts forth, against wicked men who are his emissaries, who either "resist the truth" or "hold it in "unrighteousness." As occasion offers you are to oppose those errors which are no less injurious to Christianity at large, than to the society and congregation particularly entrusted to your care, whose safety and comfort you are especially to attend to.

In

In order that you may oppose error and wickedness in every direction, and defend truth in whatever part it is attacked, an alert attention is requisite, and in you must be verified the justice of the remark, "the wise man's eyes are in his head." That what has been delivered may not wear the face of dejection without being attended with suitable encouragement, I will only add under this head, that your relation to Jesus Christ fully entitles you to the promises of God in him, of which this is one; "I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall; they shall fight against thee but shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the Lord."

It is time that I proceed to remind you—what in your deportment is necessary to the proper discharge of your relation.—"It is to endure hardness."

The soldier our Apostle had in his eye, and by whom he would exemplify the proper

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per conduct of a "minister of Jesus Christ" was poor by choice, taught to despise riches from his infancy, was initiated into an hard and sober life, to the most painful and violent exercise of body, and an abstraction from all other application and employment. His business was to consist of three things; the care of his body, in order to make it not finical, and unsuitable to the reception of a breath of wind, or a splash of dirt, but robust and active—to be careful of his arms, that they were always clean and in good condition—and of his food, which he took with him, in quantity sufficient for a time, that he might be always ready to march upon the first notice.

Many of our modern ministers are disposed to give into the "bodily exercise" so far as it comports with the love of pleasure, but as the compleat description may intend to hold forth the deportment our Apostle would have his beloved Timothy observe, they flee from it, as they should from "youthful lusts" "which war against the soul."

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That

That is neither the college, nor the academy for them, where they must learn to “approve themselves the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses.”—I will not proceed—

Read at your leisure 2 Cor. vi. Ask yourself, “Could I enter upon the christian ministry under such probations?” There is little probability of your sincerity towards God, and zeal for his honor being tried by such severe evidences. Provisional preparations however are usually made in military schools, for hazards which the scholar never runs.

Supposing you should go on and finish under those merciful indulgences with which you have set out, many ideas thrown out in the course of this address will be found inapplicable. Nevertheless some occurrences may, and undoubtedly will arise, which will make the text whence our ideas at large are drawn, necessary to be noticed.

Flesh

Flesh and blood is continually courting ease. The christian ministry, unless we give into the unscriptural customs of the times, will require some activity, and self-denial. If we oppose by our doctrine, and practice, the corruptions of human nature, "men of corrupt minds" will oppose us.—If we attempt to disconcert the sleeper, by rousing him from his repose, we awaken a petulance that will grow up into envy, and he will seek revenge. Reprove sin, and if God does not set in with the reproof, the sinner will hate you. Tell him the truth and he will count you his enemy.—Preach Christ, and the Pharisee will be upon you. Enforce the practice of Christianity, and though you do it entirely upon evangelical principles, the Antinomian, that "enemy to all righteousness," will "shoot out his arrows even bitter words."

Nor if your unsought-for popularity continues may you expect to escape the lashes of those Gentlemen, who are complaisant enough to attribute it to a weak and shallow under-

standing, and because you sing psalms, pray to, and speak of CHRIST as GOD.— Make mention of the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST imputed for justification, or an election according to grace, and of whatever in consonance with these points, the sacred scriptures authorise you to advance under the description of the things that “become sound doctrine;” and though you speak of them ever so consistently, you shall not want adversaries.

You live in a world given to change; the instability and uncertainty of human nature is to be seen amongst the best of men. It is no unusual thing among the professors of our religion, for the most sanguine and cordial professions of friendship to die away. When that is the case your human weakness may be magnified into enormity, and your familiar friends may be alienated from you. Then it is easy for them to watch for your halting. The tongue of slander will be ready to report, whatever defamation may give her commission to report. Under these revolutions

revolutions the best of men have passed ; though all who have passed under them have not been observed, for many chose to bear the shock in sorrowful silence, rather than call in the aid of publick sympathy.

A wise man will prepare for all events, and a wary minister will not trust too much to human nature, knowing that "man at his best estate is altogether vanity."

Should it ever be your lot to be exercised in this way, and as it is not impropable but you may, it will be your wisdom to prepare for it; what will you do?—Do as our Apostle recommends, "suffer the evil," concluding that you are hereunto appointed, bear the adversity recollecting that it is but for "this present time." While you feel that you are a man, shew that you are a Christian, and prove that "you can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth you."

But as you may want some conciliatory thoughts to sooth the mind, and be the companion of your trials, take such as these. They are exercises not uncommon to men engaged in the best cause.—You have long been apprised of them by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, who themselves, for conscience towards God, “endured grief, suffering wrongfully.”—Your suffering is neither so complicate, nor extensive as that of many gone before you; you have a “certain dwelling place,” which some had not; you have the civil sword to defend you, the edge of which was turned against many of “your brethren who were before you in the world.”—You have some faithful men about you who are willing to abide by you, the very reverse of *his* case who complains “all men forsook me.”—You have many temporal comforts, of which others have lived and died destitute.—You have promised supports, all included in the word; “As thy day is so shall thy strength be.” And you are certain of good coming out of every evil, according to that word of the Apostle,

Apostle, "We know that all things work
 "together for good to them that love God."
 "Our light afflictions which are but for a
 "moment, work out for us a far more ex-
 "ceeding and eternal weight of glory."—
 I could be free to enlarge upon each of
 these solacing thoughts, and add more to
 them, but prudence requires that I should
 hasten to remind you—

Of the signal character an attention to
 your deportment will bring upon you—that
 of "a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Signal
 indeed! as it will appear when you recol-
 lect, that the condescending and adorable
 Jesus uses the same epithet, when he de-
 scribes himself in the character of a shepherd,
 saying, "I am the *good* shepherd."

As he exemplified the justice of his claim
 to the epithet, so must you. Rather than
 that the sheep should perish he would "lay
 "down his life," and you must "be faithful
 "unto the death."

Before he died he could appeal unto his Father; "I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."—Your work, under whatever metaphorical term it is described, has the glory of God for its object. In imitation of Jesus Christ therefore, aim at the advancement of it; then at the close of life, if the tongue is at liberty to speak, you will be enabled to say, "I have fought a good fight." Your honor will instantly commence upon your discharge from your service, and it will be proportionable to the epithet you may have acquired, by a proper attention to the honor and glory of God. With the plaudit of "Well done, good and faithful servant," you will "enter into the joy of your Lord," and "the glory that is to follow" will infinitely compensate for "the suffering of this present life," though your suffering should far exceed that of the Apostle himself.

At the present you are under an exemption, partaking with the churches and their officers in the restored tranquility of the times;

times ; and there is not the least probability to the contrary but that you may continue peacefully to edify this "church over which" "the Holy Ghost," we trust, "has made" "you an overseer." I may therefore, transfer the idea of a good soldier, to that of a good minister of Jesus Christ ; and exhort you, having been "nourished up in the" "words of faith and sound doctrine," that whereunto you have attained, "to take" "heed unto thyself and unto thy doctrine."

—Want of caution will be injurious to action ; it will prevent both the active and passive displays of Christianity ; it will foster pride and discontent, and expose you to the very serious mistake of those who can dissolve a thousand mercies in one affliction, and make the many partake of one ; it will bring you into the habit of inculcating upon others what you will be far from being an example yourself.—It may appear as though these ideas would rank better under the former part of the address, but I beg leave to present them, with some subsequent ones, in this place, because the obligations
of

of the Christian are to be enforced with double influence, when the person on whom they are enforced is the minister who has a flock requiring the same attention with himself.

When I call your attention to your doctrine, it may be expected that I should specify the several particulars it should include; but it is not practicable that I can in this address, nearly brought to a close. They are incorporated in the summary of the principles you have given us within this hour. They are to be met with more minutely in that most excellent formulary, the Assemblies Catechism, with which you are well acquainted.

I need not remind you, that there will be wisdom and discretion requisite to the selection, and application of the several points to particular times, cases, and persons; without an attention to this rule you may injure your ministry. An improper application of truth, is like the improper application of a
most

most salutary medicine; it impedes rather than promotes the patients recovery.

The taste of the times does not relish the divinity of our catechism; and no wonder, for it is a vitiated taste, and therefore the blessed book of God, the sacred scripture, receives little more respect than is given to it for its antiquity.—The Athenian disposition of “telling and hearing of some new thing,” is very prevalent, and as though truth never intended to make her appearance till time shall be about to close, she is sought for in novel sentiments to which our fathers were strangers.—Unhappily for many, a man who has a claim to be accounted a better scholar than ordinary, can start a new sentiment, and numbers of our young men think it a mark of their wisdom to pursue it. But such a disposition is a sure mark of a vagrant mind.—The justness of your sentiments may be judged by their effects, according to that pious adage, “What comes from God will lead to God.”

If

If you can stand up in this pulpit, or elsewhere, and proclaim, "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me, and which I now preach, is not after man, for I neither received it of any man, neither was I taught but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," you will disappoint many who are watching for your halting, and some too of those, who while they are "praying the Lord of the harvest that he would thrust forth more laborers into the harvest," are waiting for conviction that he has not commissioned you.

Let them turn in hither, and with little pains they may perceive that "a great door and effectual is opened to you."—It admits you into the work of God under the most promising circumstances. You are not wanting in abilities for it. You have "zeal for God according to knowledge." You follow a Predecessor, "who in all things shewed himself a pattern of good works; in doctrine none more evidently could shew uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, found

“found speech that cannot be condemned.” I add, you follow a man whose very reserve furnished something for imitation, whose respect deepened, and widened, in the minds of his friends, as time extended the years of intimacy.—That you may follow him as he followed Christ, and contribute at least to the advance of that work towards a glorious perfection which he, was the instrument of beginning, is my fervent prayer, as to see its progress will be a matter of my praise to God.—If you follow your Predecessor or imitate him in the different parts of administration, your whole performances will be attended with “an odour of a sweet smell.”—No part of your duty will be neglected.—Like him you will know when, and where, and how long to visit.—The child, and the man of hoary hairs will engage your attention; and wherever you go, “the word of Christ” will flow freely from you, as well “as dwell richly in you.”—By all means have the eye of your mind fixed upon children and young people.—Labor in an especial

cial manner to do them good—Perhaps you will not find it practicable to carry on a continued discourse, but always have a few weighty sentences to direct to them seasonably dropped.—In an especial manner I charge you, take care of one,[†] whom my affection would prompt me to mention by name; have a son by adoption before one is born to you, and “watch for his soul as one that “must give an account.”

Young people are quick in apprehension, and attentive in observing what is adopted in conversation before them.—Remember this when you sit in company with your friends, and however cheerful you may be in the tenor of conversation, leave no room for them to make a reflection to this effect,—that the liberties you take in descanting upon characters, are unbecoming the servant of Jesus Christ, and that the levity of the social intercourse is incompatible with the gravity

[†] The late Mr. Tuppen's Son.

gravity the minister should support.—Be cautious of becoming the retailer of idle, or evil reports, even when justly grounded and deserving of credit; leave that unforbidden business, and shew your friends that such a current is too filthy for the purity of your mind.—You cannot with becoming confidence inculcate, “Speak evil of no man,” unless you are careful to avoid being a partaker of the same sin. The minister had better sit in awkward silence, or abruptly depart from the company, than keep up the spirit of conversation in this way.—This hint may be taken as characteristic of that prudence, and discretion which I would largely recommend and inforce in relation to the whole of your deportment towards this society, the neighbouring churches, and towards mankind at large. Indeed, my dear friend, you will want it as “the guide of your youth,” and the companion of your life. As the “wisdom that is from above” “entereth into thine heart, and the knowledge” of the will
of

of God "is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion
 "shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep
 "thee;" and if life is continued to that long
 period to which my wishes extend, it will then
 admit of a review, which as often as it is
 taken, will excite thanksgiving to God.

THE

ASSISTANCE AND RESPECT

TO BE GIVEN TO

MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL

SET FORTH IN

A N A D D R E S S

DELIVERED

BY REV. JOHN ADAMS,

I COR. VIII. XXIV.

WHEREFORE SHEW FORTH TO THEM, AND BEFORE THE CHURCHES;

THE PROOF OF YOUR LOVE,

AND OF OUR ROASTING ON YOUR BEHALF.

ASSISTANCE AND RESPECT

MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL

AN ADDRESS



BY REV. JOHN ADAMS.

I COR. VIII. XXIV.

THE PROOF OF YOUR LOVE

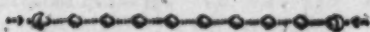
AND OF OUR GOSSIPING IN YOUR SERVICE

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THE ASSISTANCE AND RESPECT TO BE GIVEN TO A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.



As I have no doubt of the event which has brought us together being a joyful one to this religious society, I sincerely congratulate you on it, and rejoice with you that the breach which was made by the death of that eminent servant of God, your late Pastor, is made up by Providence so suitably in the present instance.

Upon the settlement of a man with a church, it is a proper rule established, in addition to the prayer offered to God for him, and the people of his charge, to give a word of advice to both. Part of this work is finished; a faithful and affectionate address has been made to the minister; and

now, as desired, I shall give the word of exhortation to you, as the people; from the advice of the Apostle,

I THESS. V. 12, 13.

AND WE BESEECH YOU, BRETHREN, TO KNOW THEM THAT LABOR AMONG YOU; AND ARE OVER YOU IN THE LORD, AND ADMONISH YOU; AND TO ESTEEM THEM VERY HIGHLY IN LOVE FOR THEIR WORK'S SAKE, AND BE AT PEACE AMONG YOURSELVES.

THESE words afford a comprehensive view, of the duties of ministers and people in relation to each other, and therefore are well adapted to remind you of this church, of the obligations under which you are laid by your connection, and which you must endeavor to discharge, if you would walk "in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

It

It is not my present business to enlarge on what is here mentioned, relative to the origin, dignity, and employment of the ministerial office ; nor is it necessary ; so many important things having been said on them already ; therefore I shall content myself with remarking, that to labor in the word and doctrine, to watch for souls, to preserve fidelity towards God and man, are things that require, in order to their right discharge, great grace, wisdom, temper, resolution, and perseverance. On the other hand, the duties of people in the same relation, are various, great, and difficult, and require much divine assistance, diligence, and love, to the due performance of them. To these I shall chiefly, if not wholly confine my present attention, agreeable to the design of the day, and the words before us. " And we beseech you, brethren, to know " them which labor among you, and are " over you in the Lord, and admonish you ; " and esteem them very highly in love for " their work's sake, and be at peace among " yourselves." The whole of what is here

required of you in relation to your minister, appears to me to be included in—a proper regard to his *work*, and to his *person*; or—

That you endeavor to further the dispensation of the gospel in his hands, and—

That you treat him in such a manner as the scripture directs.

You should do as much as possible to succeed the work of your minister.—

The purposes of God, in giving the gospel, and establishing a dispensation of it to the end of the world, are great and glorious; his principal intentions thereby being to glorify his name, and benefit his creatures. This is capable of extensive proof; but in nothing is it more pleasingly demonstrated than the language and conduct of the angels, when they appeared to the shepherds, and sung an anthem upon the birth of Christ, of which this was a part, “Glory
“to God in the highest, and on earth peace,
“good-

“good-will towards men.—Ah! to the praise of the riches of divine grace be it spoken, the design of the gospel is to give incessant proof that “God is love;” to testify “that God was in Christ, reconciling the “world unto himself, not imputing unto them “their trespasses,” to shew the necessity and possibility of repentance and pardon, to fill the careless with due concern, to bring the weary soul to rest, and to make those who hear the word, holy in life, safe and comfortable in death, and unspeakably happy on their arrival in eternity.

It is the glory of the gospel also, that it is not only a personal, but relative blessing. The manifest tendency of it, is to bring the most important benefits to your friends, and neighbours as well as yourselves: nay, so extended is the advantage designed to be, that it is to bless all the families of the earth; and it is observable, that consonant with the promise Christ expressly charged the first promulgers of it, to “go and preach “it to every creature.”

While ministers who are encouraged by a mark of honor, and a motive to emulation, being called "workers together with God," are laboring to advance those glorious ends so worthy of the Supreme Being, shall the people be reluctant to come in "to the help of the Lord?" Shall they be averse to assist in this business of mercy?

I know not of any duty enjoined on the minister, which has not a counterpart belonging to the people with whom he is connected. A minister's usefulness is greatly impeded without the aid of his people; but if, while he is watching for souls as "one who must give an account," they do the same, it may reasonably be expected that great advantages will ensue. If "a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver," of which I doubt not you will hear many; such a word, fitly respoken, may prove the same, and be attended with "a second benefit." I would therefore have you expose those parts of your moral furniture by conversation to the view of your families, friends,
and

and neighbours, that their brilliancy, richness, and value, may be seen. Do not let those excellent sentences of sermons be lost, but by seasonably repeating things you hear, diffuse knowledge, and enforce truth as much as possible, and add all the energy you can to efforts for promoting the spiritual advantage of those around you.

Make a point of giving constant attendance on the word preached.

It is a most discouraging circumstance to see persons remiss in hearing, where the necessity of their neglect is not evident. Few things can more essentially damp the holy Ardor which should inspire a minister to excel, than an indifference in the people, “whether they hear, or whether they forbear.”—But if you fill up your places regularly, it will imply a desire of edification in you, it will be a source of satisfaction to him, and excite to industry in preparing, and ardor in delivering, the things which are profitable for “doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction

"instruction in righteousness." Never let your conduct give him occasion to say,—To what end is my reading and meditation for the pulpit, if the result of all my care is treated with neglect, and not considered worth attention. Common observation justifies the remark, that a minister's labors are always best in those places where he knows he is most regarded, and attended. I wish you, therefore, to encourage him "who is over you in the Lord," by taking a visible delight in his services. Let him see you are sensible of his improvement; thus you will stir up his emulation, and reward his industry, more than by "thousands of gold and silver."

Exert your influence to engage others to hear the gospel with yourselves.

Paul observes of some "being crafty I caught them with guile." This craft was not wicked, this guile was without sin. I conceive this part of his conduct in the light of example, and therefore recommend it

to

to your imitation. "He that wineth souls
 "is wise." He that labors to restore sight to
 the blind does well. Turning the wicked
 to God is more than commendable, it is re-
 wardable; "if a man err from the truth and
 "one convert him, let him know, that he
 "which converteth the sinner from the error
 "of his ways shall save his soul from death,
 "and shall hide a multitude of sins." And
 as in the way we are speaking of you may
 contribute your influence, be not back-
 ward to it, or weary in it. If he who puts
 a stranger in a wrong course is guilty of his
 straying, and he who puts a person in the
 way of danger, is guilty of his fall-
 ing; so he, who by his solicitude brings a
 sinner under the means of grace and the
 word preached, should they take effect, be-
 comes accessary to his salvation, and "his
 "labor shall not be in vain in the Lord." I
 wish you, therefore, to abound greatly in
 this practice, that you may "serve your ge-
 "neration by the will of God," and "shine
 "as stars in the firmament for ever and
 "ever."

Be

Be concerned to feel the efficacy of the truth delivered.

To find pleasure in hearing the word and not profit, is only reviving an old state of things, highly unacceptable to God, and unprofitable to man. We should aim to be benefited rather than charmed; though if both are to be attained it is no doubt so much the better; and as I think this is your case, improve your advantages while you have them, and labor to receive the word so as that your "profit may appear unto all men." The holy lives of its professors are the greatest ornament and strongest recommendation of the gospel. Such lives we wish you to live; but as no effect can exceed its cause, unless the word is made useful to your souls, we shall not expect to see you "grow in grace, and in the knowledge and love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Whatever the truths may be which you hear, strive to have your hearts properly affected with them, to gain increasing wisdom, spirituality and holiness; unless

unless you make these the objects of attainment, the means will not, cannot render you adequate compensation for your pains in using them. It is an awful thing to have the best advantages, and make no suitable improvement. With what attention and solicitude should we always hear the gospel which is either "a favor of life unto life," "or of death unto death," to all who hear it? O my friends, let me beseech you to bear in mind that you are dying creatures, remember that you are accountable beings, and as you suddenly may, so you eventually must give an account of all the privileges you have enjoyed. I hope whenever you appear in a religious assembly, if the the Lord asked you, as the angel did Elijah, "What doest thou here?" You would be able to say, Lord, thou knowest it is to promote my own good, and the benefit of others; it is to behold thy beauty, and enquire in thy temple.—If these were your views and intentions, you would make such a progress in religion as would necessarily diffuse an increasing lustre over
your

your whole conversation, much to the honor of the holy gospel, and to the advancement of the empire of the Redeemer.

Be frequent and fervent in prayer to God, and always let ministers in general, and your own in particular, share in your petitions.

When a christian restrains prayer before God, God will restrain his blessings. By a conscientious discharge of this duty he will be "fat and flourishing in the courts of the Lord." You may rest assured that there is no way in which the churches can come in to the help of the Lord better than by addressing the throne of grace, and that no method is better calculated to carry on and support the interest of religion than prayer and supplication. And here the poorest of the flock can do as much as the rich, and if all are "joined together in the same mind and judgment," by your united requests "the kingdom of heaven will suffer violence, and the violent will take it by force."—

The

The Apostle says to the church of Thessalonica, "Brethren, pray for us." If he, and his fellow laborers stood in need of the prayer of believers, that a door of utterance might be given to speak the word as they ought, and a door of entrance for the word to be effectual to the salvation of those that heard it,—how much more do preachers now who live in so remote a period from the days of extraordinary inspiration, want the interest of their people with God, that their "word might not be bound, but have free course, run, and be glorified?" Do not leave praying work to be done only, or principally by your minister; you have as much liberty and "power with God" as he has, and when your addresses come up before him together, you may prevail and bring down upon your heads additional blessings. A spirit of prayer is not only advantageous to the minister, but it is alike beneficial to yourselves. Your personal profiting under the word depends much upon it; if you would gain much benefit, you must use much prayer, for our edification is

pro-

moted more by the disposition of the mind than by the excellency of the means. As a further encouragement to this duty and privilege, remember this is eminently the way to do good to others. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." By this means you can be of great advantage to your fellow creatures, even without their knowledge, concurrence, or consent. Hoping that you are suitably disposed to "wait continually upon the Lord," and to "pray without ceasing," I have but one observation more to make under this head, which respects—

The necessity of a proper attention to the poor.

"The poor have the gospel preached unto them." It is peculiarly designed for their benefit, and we should endeavor to answer this end, by leaving sufficient room in our places of worship for the convenient accommodation of those hearers of the word, who cannot claim seats by subscription.—

tion.—Persons in high stations command respect for themselves, but the Lord interposes on behalf of others, and calls upon his people to “condescend to men of low estate.” It cannot be pleasing to “the Master of assemblies,” to see the poor, through inability to procure places, deprived of hearing the gospel of salvation, in which their concern lies as deep, and to which their right is as clear as any class of rational creatures.—But if God had not called our attention to this object, there would have remained reason sufficient to have proved it a duty, especially since it is notorious that a large proportion of the real disciples of Christ are to be found in the lower ranks of life, in many of whom the most eminent degrees of grace appear. “God has chosen the poor of this world rich in faith.” They have more religion, or they express what they have in a better manner, and greater variety than christians in high stations, Therefore it can never become us, while we have any regard to humanity, holiness, or God, to treat the poor

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with

with neglect. The Lord has given them a name in his family, and we should give them a place in his house.—It is evident *you* are not reproveable in this matter, and therefore I have not spoken to upbraid and censure, but only to commend and exhort; hoping that you will always make it an object and follow the same rule of conduct you have hitherto pursued without the least deviation. However, give me leave to say, that what we have mentioned is a circumstance which loudly calls for attention from our popular congregations throughout this kingdom. In some of them, an amendment in this article ought to take place, yea, must be made, before they can with truth be said to do all that lies in their power to promote the success of the gospel. In addition to your concern for his work there is also—

A personal regard, which consists in treating your minister as the word of God directs.

Though

Though this point may not require many words with respect to you, who I believe, are ready to consider the obligation laid on the hearers of the Apostles, as binding on yourselves, yet it may not be amiss to mention a few of the many things included in the duty. It certainly takes in—

An endeavor properly to support him.

This is to be done according to your ability, “not of constraint, but willingly.” It is not a matter of mere duty; much more depends upon it than we are aware of, for it is with a society as with an individual, “the liberal man deviseth liberal things, and “and by liberal things shall he stand.” I readily grant that a man should not “seek “great things” from the church, and when he is of the same mind with the Apostle, he will not, being able to say, “I seek not yours “but you.”—Yet surely a minister has wants as well as others, and “the laborer is worthy “of his hire.” “Do ye not know that they “which minister about holy things live of

“the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” An enlargement here would be unnecessary, if not impertinent; I have not delivered anything on this head on your account, but for the sake of others, who may not be like minded; and in consideration of those changes which may happen in future seasons, and succeeding posterity.—

It takes in, countenance shewn to him.

You are to afford him every species of private and public sanction, to encourage his work, and appear for his character. It springs from affection, and is expressed in zeal. Fear and shame are the opposites to it. This was what Nicodemus was defective in, when he began his religious course, “he came to Jesus by night.” It is remarkable that the disciples were more deficient in this than any thing besides, therefore when Christ was apprehended

hended to suffer and die, one denied him and the others forsook him. Hence we see how far persons whose state is good, overcome with fear and shame, may withhold suitable marks of respect in time of need. Therefore take heed. Ministers are set forth, "for the defence of the Gospel and have many difficulties and discouragements in their way. I need not particularize their trials, nor labour to prove the necessity of the professors of religion standing by, and countenancing those who are to struggle through them to accomplish their arduous work. When by the election of a congregation a man is called to the office and has erected the standard of the gospel, for the people to refuse to countenance and encourage him is to be ashamed of his labour, and a disgrace to their profession.—

It takes in, a special regard to temper.

If a respect for a person does not change the disposition, it will form the mind to please. It will make the temper courteous, if not unblamable, and if not perfect it will make

fit tolerable. This is expected to result from
 very high esteem in natural relations, how
 much more in those connections which are
 religious, founded in spiritual inclination,
 unbiaſed choice, and unbribed preference.
 As their caſe is to be cenſured who neglect
 “ the Author of every good and perfect gift ”
 by over valuation of the inſtrument he con-
 deſcends to uſe, ſo their conduct is to be a-
 voided, who are ſo deſtitute of affectionate
 reſpect for a miniſter as to render his ſituation
 unpleaſant and weariſome. As nothing is
 more contrary to the eſteem here recom-
 mended, than treating him with moroſe re-
 ſerve, or overbearing insolence, ſo nothing
 can render his life more uncomfortable.
 Where regard abates, the pleaſure of the paſ-
 toral connection declines, and where regard
 ends, the paſtoral connection diſſolves, or
 ſhould diſſolve; for where petulance, ſour-
 neſs, perverſeneſs, and contradiction pre-
 vail, miniſterial uſefulneſs is terminated; and
 where this diſpoſition becomes general, a
 man who would yet force himſelf on ſuch a
 people is culpable, and deſerves diſreſpect;
 for,

for, as they, when he acts contrary to the scripture, may dismiss him; so he, when they act contrary to scripture, ought to part with them. There are some congregations who deal with a minister according to the import of the word; they ridiculously call him the head, and treat him as the tail of the society; but this is only the case with those who will not regard the word of exhortation here given, or if they regard it, it is only as a thing to be admired, rather than a law to be obeyed.—How pleasing is the prospect of comfort and usefulness, when a minister, endeavoring affectionately to promote the good of his people, meets with kind and agreeable deportment; when he is treated with love, attention, forbearance, humility, and peace!—This is acting according to the direction of the gospel; and this I am happy to have reason to say, is the nature of your disposition, so that by shewing what you should be, I have only discovered what you are. There is but one thing more I would submit to consideration, which is to guard you from a danger which arises from a mis-

application of regard towards your minister, which manifests itself in—

An improper desire of enjoying his company.

Much care and application to study are necessary in order to become “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” I suppose it will be readily granted that Timothy was as much qualified as any modern minister, however the apostle would have him devoted wholly to reading, meditation and prayer, that his profiting may appear unto all men. It is reproachable to see a minister fond of spending his time in company, to the neglect of study; and it is a horrid sin when he feasts himself, and starves his people. But how any one can avoid it who indulges a fondness for visiting is to me inconceivable. Protracted and frequent interviews must necessarily take up the time which should be spent in making suitable improvements in knowledge and proper preparations for the pulpit.—

pit.—A laborer in the word and doctrine, as all who pretend to the office should be, ought not to be a loiterer from house to house; he should prefer mental to corporeal ornaments, an ability to feed his people with knowledge and understanding to the richest delicacies earth can afford, and should take infinitely more delight in improving his whole congregation with the result of his close attention to God and his Word, than in being a pleasurable or even improving companion in small circles of acquaintance.—But to this purpose his visits must be few, short, and well regulated.

A man with a taste for improvement you have for your minister is very well known. Indulge him in it, indulge him in it. Let me beseech you to hinder him as little as possible. Never, never employ that maxim, I esteem him very highly, and therefore desire his company improperly, and it is all that I mean to inculcate upon you, and all that duty requires of you on this head. If you would have him eminent in the pulpit, let him

him be much in the study, for much thought alone, is of more importance to promote the benefit both of a minister and the people than any conversation can be. Besides however edifying his private discourse may be, a few only can be profited by it, while if carried to excess it must decrease his capacity of being so instructive and beneficial as he otherwise would to the hundreds, and often thousands, he meets in the publick assemblies. There is no need for me to say to you, that the lesser should give way to the greater, or that we should sacrifice personal gratification to publick advantage, whenever there is such an interference as makes a compliance with both impossible. And therefore, as I am persuaded, he will not be neglectful in visiting you when it is necessary, I entreat you never to constrain him to do it when it is not. I would only beg leave to add, that while you prudently give up private satisfaction to publick utility, it may be necessary to caution you to beware of a jealous spirit. Remember, that esteem, guided by wisdom, has much confidence and little jealousy in it.

it. Love with jealousy is infelicity, let it be found where it will; but love with candor and confidence, is joy, peace, and happiness; and these are the things, which, through succeeding years, I wish you and your minister to enjoy.

What I have laid before you appears to me to be the most important and suitable, considering occasion, time, and place. Though I have delivered myself in a variety of exhortations: I do not wish to be understood as if I supposed you did not know these things before, or would be reluctant to comply with them, when reminded of your obligation. Such a sentiment comports with the common idea, that to exhort, and to censure is the same thing; but this is a mistaken notion, since exhortation is as much designed to encourage perseverance as excite to a commencement in well doing. Such false imagination I wish to obliterate from your mind, as it is no less prejudicial than wrong; for since a great part of revelation consists in precepts which
must

must be set forth, these in general are no sooner repeated than a supposed impeachment of the hearers' conduct, brings a gloom on the spirit which is inimical to their ready compliance with the divine commands, and contrary to their own comfort and advantage: for a soul in that state is unfit for either. Renounce the sentiment and avoid this danger. Be assured that the duties ought to be preached, not only because they should, but because they are done, well knowing that we are depraved creatures, and are apt to forget; and hence it is "I beseech you to suffer the word of exhortation," and to regard what I have said as designed to "stir up your minds by way of remembrance."

I shall now conclude with one general observation.—You see of what importance a spirit of christian love is, from the extensive influence it has on a right performance of the several parts of religion. In the passage before us, we see what duties ministers lie under to their people—what duties people should

should discharge towards their ministers—and what line of conduct they should follow in relation to one another. But none of these duties of their respective states and stations can be properly done unless they are actuated by a spirit of divine love. Without this, ministers cannot “preach the word”—watch for souls—or consistently “labor and admonish.” Without this, people cannot “hear to profit”—“submit themselves”—“know those that are over them”—or “esteem them very highly for their work’s sake.” Without this they cannot, in the sense the Apostle enjoins it, “be at peace among themselves.” But with this blessed principle, these, and all other duties, which religion requires, can be performed with ease and pleasure.—They are the holiest and happiest who know most of the constraining “love of God in the heart.” “God is love,” and so should all his people be. It is a heavenly disposition, it is the “bond of perfectness,” it is “the fulfilling of the whole law.” A man can no more live to the glory of God without love, than he

he can naturally subsist without air and food. O that all who profess the name of Christ, were justly sensible of this truth, and properly affected with this sacred principle.—Grant O Father of all mercies and God of all grace, that a spirit of love may descend on all thy churches, on all thy people, that they may “love one another out of a “pure heart fervently,” that all who profess thy name may discover thy nature, and “follow,” in a greater measure than ever, “peace with all men, and holiness, without “which no man shall see the Lord.”—If this was the case, mere formality would subside—lukewarmness would be a stranger to devotion—divisions would end—passion cease to be named—moroseness no longer wrinkle the professed christian’s brow—and self-importance, insolence, and cruelty would be destroyed by our being “tenderly affectioned one towards another, with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another.”—We are happy to find that this grand principle has appeared in your disposition and practice.

I ever

I ever wish carefully to avoid pronouncing undeserved praise; but the same divine lips that forbids "giving flattering titles to any" commands us not to diminish just merit or to overlook the grace of God, whenever we see it displayed in persons or societies. The becoming manner in which you acted up to these precepts of the Gospel, under long continued, and very distressing circumstances, with regard to your late Pastor, from the commencement of his illness to the time of his departure, is retained in the memory of many, with pleasure and satisfaction.—The duties which providence again imposes upon you, are those of love, and therefore it is only to remind you of them in their order, and your affection will prompt you to do them. A thousand arguments and persuasions can never make a dead man move, because of his state, but if you demonstrate to a living man what he should do, without a single exhortation or motive to activity, he will move forward immediately. It is with the affectionate christian as with the living man; and therefore possessing

sing the disposition the apostle here recom-
 mends, you cannot fail in performing the
 duties enjoined. Strive to maintain a con-
 sistency of character. Be what you have
 been, and continue what you are by the
 grace of God. "Whereunto ye have alrea-
 dy attained, walk by the same rule and
 mind the same thing," yea do more "forget-
 ting those which are behind, and reaching
 forth to those that are before, press to-
 wards the mark of the prize of your high
 calling." "Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, al-
 ways abounding in the work of the Lord,
 for as much as ye know that your labor is
 not in vain in the Lord." And now may
 the God of all grace and peace be with you
 and do for you exceedingly abundant a-
 bove all that we ask or think, according to
 the power that worketh in us; unto him
 be glory in the church by Christ Jesus,
 throughout all ages, world without end,
 Amen.

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